

Symposium on Julie Rose's *Free Time*

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Symposium on Julie Rose's *Free Time*: An Introduction

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In the United Kingdom, more than thirty percent of those in paid employment express a desire to work fewer hours. Some of these individuals are willing to accept a corresponding reduction in pay, but others cannot countenance such a sacrifice: economic security must take priority.¹ Moreover, these attitudes are by no means unique to the UK, with many people across the world feeling that they spend too much of their time at work. But things do not have to be this way. Policymakers have at their disposal a variety of tools that can reduce working hours and, more generally, enhance the amount of free time that citizens enjoy. These include direct measures, such as working time regulations and the provision of free childcare, and indirect measures, such as policies that strengthen the power of trade unions.

In *Free Time*, Julie L. Rose persuasively argues that governments should make greater use of these tools. She does this, first, by establishing the case for a right to a fair share of free time; and second, by showing that, in order to protect this right, it is necessary to do more than regulate society's distribution of income and wealth. Rose's book makes important contributions to our understanding of the concept of "free time", the nature of citizens' rights to free time, and the moral status of available instruments for ensuring that free time is distributed fairly. This Symposium brings together a series of thought-provoking papers that explore Rose's arguments in further detail in order to advance the debate around the equitable distribution of free time, as well as a range of related issues.

Rose opens the Symposium with a short precis of her book, which acts as a useful introduction to the discussions that follow. The first commenter is Robert E. Goodin, who addresses the problem of how to conceptualise discretionary time. More specifically, Goodin takes issue with what he calls the "empirical inscrutability" of Rose's account, and appeals to this concern to motivate support for his preferred alternative, which makes use of "social benchmarking".

1 For recent data, see Office for National Statistics (2018).

The next two articles focus on Rose's claim that citizens have a right to a fair share of free time. Jeppe von Platz attempts to expose a serious ambiguity in Rose's arguments: either she relies on a "vacuous notion of fairness" or, contrary to what Rose claims to have established, what citizens can claim is merely an adequate share of free time. Lucas Stanczyk then draws attention to the possibility that many affluent citizens who complain about being overworked – and who complain more than others about being overworked – are not in fact denied their fair share of free time. Stanczyk concludes by reflecting upon the implications of this possibility for the justifiability of the policies that Rose defends.

The final two commenters are Désirée Lim and Rosa Terlazzo. Lim's task is to construct a republican case for granting citizens a fair share of free time, which can supplement Rose's own argument. She builds her case by showing how citizens' enjoyment of a fair share of free time can be instrumentally important to realising non-domination. Terlazzo employs Rose's framework to draw attention to another neglected resource to which citizens might have claims, namely a "sense of moral entitlement to make use of basic liberties". The Symposium concludes with a response from Rose that elaborates her view and that replies to the objections that have been raised.

I hope that this Symposium advances our understanding of issues of considerable political concern, and that it prompts further discussion about the appropriate regulation of the labour market. I am grateful to the authors for their contributions, to the papers' referees for their constructive feedback, and to Clare Burgum and Serena Olsaretti for all of their help.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Office for National Statistics, 2018: "EMP16: Underemployment and Overemployment" (Edition: February 2018).